

2/12/16
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Please support the Commission on Children

Since 1985, the Commission on Children has provided the General Assembly with expertise and forward thinking on a host of important policies concerning Connecticut's children and families, including school readiness, school safety, disaster planning, parent leadership, father engagement, primary prevention, federal-funds maximization, reading instruction, immunization, anti-bullying, home visitation, and two-generational strategies.

The Commission on Children:

- **Brings revenue into programs crucial to Connecticut children and families.** In 2015, it secured \$463,747 from federal and philanthropic sources for everything from parent leadership training to development of new pre-school curricula. This equaled 62 percent of the agency's budget, with all of the funds going directly into communities.
- **Works with unexpected stakeholders, bringing diverse viewpoints into state policies.** Whether it's Facebook and Lady Gaga's Born This Way Foundation (who've joined Connecticut's efforts to improve school climate) or People's United Bank and Liberty Bank (whose philanthropic arms have contributed generously to parent leadership programs), the Commission makes a point of reaching out to anyone who can help improve the lives of children and families.
- **Emphasizes democracy, not just in theory but in practice.** The Commission is a master in communications, public forums, and tool sharing. Through initiatives like the Parent Leadership, it trains parents and youth alike on how to become thoughtful, impactful citizens of Connecticut.
 - In Middlesex County we have graduated close to 500 parent and community leaders; some results: 10 alum Serve on governance councils, 26 have become PTA/O officers, 4 are/were Board of Ed members, 3 alum currently on the District Data Team, 4 are members of the NAACP with three past officers, 4 are members of the North End Action Team - two were past Presidents, 5 alumni have served on the School Readiness Council, graduates have testified before the state legislature, raised funds for their schools...
- **Thinks innovatively, often earning Connecticut national praise as a leader on key issues.** This includes:
 - Design of the first two-generational state policy in the nation. This pilot program, launched by the co-chairs of the legislature's Appropriations Committee and with strong bipartisan support addresses family poverty by targeting resources to improve the parents' success in the workforce and the children's success in school. Partners include the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Governors Association, the Aspen Institute, the Annie E. Casey and W. K. Kellogg foundations, along with the U.S. Administration for Children and Families.
 - Creation of a pilot program in reading instruction that has led to a 35 percent improvement in first- and second-graders' phonic awareness over baseline scores. Organized by the Commission, the legislature's Black and Puerto Rican Caucus, the University of Connecticut, and LiteracyHow, the program employs research-based teacher training, changes in the reading-assessment instrument, and targeted intervention to not only improve students' reading comprehension, but narrow the achievement gap.

In addition, the Commission continually organizes news conferences and hosts high-profile public forums on important issues, such as the impact of natural and unnatural disasters on Connecticut's children, gaps in our mental health system, how technology impacts child cognition, how bias leaks into policy, how our welfare system needs reform for families, and the advantages of two-generational practices.

Please continue to support the Commission on Children.

